

ANNIE TRUMBULL SLOSSON

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On October 4, 1926, Mrs. Annie Trumbull Slosson died at her home, 26 Gramercy Park, and the New York Entomological Society lost one of its oldest and most distinguished members. She was elected at its first meeting held June 29, 1892. Later the Society met at her home, 38 East 23rd St.; and still later, through her intercession with the late Morris K. Jessup, in the American Museum of Natural History. A perusal of Mr. Leng's "History of the New York Entomological Society, 1893-1918," to be found in this JOURNAL for 1918, will further show how much the Society is indebted to her.

In the same number of the JOURNAL with the "History," there is a characteristic article by Mrs. Slosson giving her "Reminiscences of the Early Days of the New York Entomological Society," and, as might be expected, it is a most interesting and sprightly production. It should be remembered that it was written when she was over eighty years of age. She might well joke with us in her kindly and appreciative way, and call us her "boys as I love to style you."

Mrs. Slosson wrote the first article for the first number of our JOURNAL, March, 1893, and of course it was followed by many more. She likewise contributed to most of the other American entomological journals of the day, and to some of the botanical ones as well. She once told me that she had commenced her natural history studies with plants. She also told me of her early interest in a very large turtle that had been brought from the Pacific Ocean by a sailor-man to her Connecticut home, when she was a child. She and her brother called it "Terrie," and often rode on its back. Said turtle, possessed of great strength, would pull up the stake to which it was tied, and entering the water of the bay would cause the family some concern and much amusement by being seen off shore with its head protruding like

a stake above the surface of the water. He would be brought home; tied fast once more, and all would be well until the next escape. Alas! the turtle was killed during the winter by rats, while it was hibernating in the cellar.

Mrs. Slosson was forty-eight years of age when she commenced her entomological studies. In the first of her articles on "A Few Memories," contributed to this JOURNAL, June, 1915, she writes: "I had always from childhood been fond of nature and for years devoted myself to botany, being so fortunate as to make some rather interesting discoveries and being a correspondent of Prof. Asa Gray and other old-time plant students. But it was not until the early spring of 1886 that I turned my attention to the study of insects." She progressed very rapidly, and soon had a remarkable collection, that, as years went on, was destined to be visited by many noted entomologists. She was one of the first to collect in the region about Miami, Florida, and naturally secured some rare and new species. In the summer she went to Franconia, New Hampshire, and usually spent some time at the top of Mt. Washington. Her captures were sent to specialists, and many of the new ones later bore the name of *slossonæ*. I believe that about one hundred species have been so named, and she was much amused that the very first one of them, named in her honor by her friend Henry Edwards, should die a little later and sink "into the dread valley of synonymy."

In 1894 she published her first list of the Insects Taken in the Alpine Regions of Mt. Washington, and later many additional lists appeared, about ten in all. Mrs. Slosson's papers are not only useful, and of value as contributions to entomology, but they are good literature as well.

In the *Bulletin of the Brooklyn Entomological Society* for June, 1916, she has an article on "Entomology and Literature," and states that they "work well together in harness, each being a good running mate for the other." She certainly often made them so, and added many literary gems to our entomological literature. Her "Just One Log," in *Entomological News* for March, 1905; "A Hunt for *Saldoidea*," in the same journal for November, 1908, and her papers, "A Few Memories," published in our JOURNAL, reminiscent of Henry Edwards and Dr. Packard,

have, as has been stated, not only much of entomological value, but are very interesting otherwise. This is easily explained, for to an almost entirely different set of people Mrs. Slosson was known as a writer of good literature, and particularly of sketches of New England life. She received many a letter thanking her for her helpful stories, and many a caller came to her door who knew only of her literary achievements, and nothing of her entomological studies. Such callers seeing the many boxes arranged like books on the shelves often made remarks, when shown their contents, that Mrs. Slosson used to relate to us with much amusement—her visitors just did not understand.

In 1878 Mrs. Slosson's book, "The China Hunters Club, by the Youngest Member," was published. There was an introduction by her brother-in-law, Dr. W. C. Prime; it contained a chapter on American History Illustrated in Pottery, and the illustrations were by her brother, Gurdon. The book is now out of print and sells, when found, for \$7.50 or more. Her most appreciated story was Fishing Jimmy (1889), a character who was immediately preached about and quoted on both sides of the Atlantic. She published at least a dozen other stories in book form, some of them first appearing in the great magazines of the day. Many of her essays on the birds she at one time or another had in her aviary, or her observations during her walks in the country, appeared in the *Christian Endeavor World*, even as late as the year 1921. Notwithstanding the age of the writer, these essays are bright and informative. In that year it was written of her: "On May 18 Mrs. Slosson will be eighty-three years old, and those who are privileged to know her find her as cheery and vivacious as any woman of half her years." It was in 1921 also that she wrote thus of her youth: "I was a wonderful dreamer of dreams. Not only those dreams of the daytime common to the young, of a future too bright and fair for fulfillment, but dreams of the night and of sleep. These always interested me and each day with its new morning I would lie and look out of my little east window to the sunrise across the sea, recalling the visions of the night and wondering about them." That was it; she was keenly interested in most things and she once wrote: "I wish I could show you how easily you could make your lives full of beauty, interest and keen

enjoyment. Your quiet farm life may seem to you dull, monotonous. But what a museum of wonders is the piece of woods a stone's throw from your door; what books could tell you what nature's pleasant pictured pages tell?"

Mrs. Slosson was born in Stonington, Connecticut, May 18, 1838, and came of a distinguished family of which she was the ninth child. "An older brother, James Hammond Trumbull, distinguished himself as a philologist. He was appointed lecturer on the Indian languages of North America at Yale in 1873 and subsequently compiled a vocabulary from John Elliot's Indian Bible as he was reputed to be the only living American who could read it. For many years Mr. Trumbull was president of the Connecticut Historical Society. Like his sister he was interested in entomology and during his early life assisted in cataloguing the reptiles, fishes, shells, etc., of this state. A second brother was Henry Clay Trumbull. His career included a few years in the railroad business at Hartford, service as chaplain in the Civil War, and a long period as editor of the Sunday School Times in Philadelphia. A most conspicuous achievement was the discovery, during a trip through Egypt, Syria, etc., in 1881, of the biblical site of Kadesh Barnea on the southern boundary of Palestine, which had been the object of research for many years. The artist, Gurdon Trumbull, was a still younger member of this family."

With such family associates, and herself gifted by nature, it is little wonder that Mrs. Slosson illuminated with much wit and wisdom the things about which she wrote. She well understood, or understood as well as anybody appears to understand, the meaning of human life. With advancing age she used to observe that she ought not and would not complain, and then with a smile would add, that she "had had her day." But to many of us comes the regret that her days were not even longer.



ANNIE TRUMBULL SLOSSON
TAKEN IN 1913